

December 24, 1955

Dr. Roger S. Mitchell
Webb Building
University of Colorado Medical Center
Denver 20, Colorado

Dear Roger:

I have your letter of the 21st. I was less distressed by the conservative reaction of the Faculty Committee than I was encouraged by Dr. Meiklejohn's and Dr. Waring's support of the idea. If the medical faculty is as constrained for financial support from the state as I have been told, I am not surprised that they should want to consolidate their present position before expanding into new fields. Meanwhile, other medical schools (e.g. Virginia and Vanderbilt, and I have some reason to hope Wisconsin, too) are expanding their programs in medical genetics, and I am confident that it will be adopted quite generally throughout the country during the next several years. There is no great hurry, and with Larry on deck you certainly will not be deficient in ~~medical~~ genetic research.

I suppose you will want to know whether we should continue our discussions a propos my joining your staff on any new basis. I am inclined to think not at the present time: at the moment I am rather preoccupied with reoccupying the lab in the Genetics building, which is being remodelled now, and in trying to catalyze a medical genetics program at Wisconsin. You will have to decide whether you want to proceed in other directions for the Foundation, or defer other long range commitments until you can foresee the ultimate outcome of the Genetics proposals. I have every hope of seeing you in St. Louis, in about six weeks, and hope we can discuss these matters more comfortably then. If the Medical School changes its mind, we can, if you like, reopen the discussion.

This decision of the moment has no bearing on my interested hopes for the success of your Foundation enterprises, not only in relation to Larry's promise, and the valued friendships we have made through these discussions, but also because of the very beneficent impact that your Foundation can have on the furtherance of medical research. Whatever direction you move in, I hope you will never be tempted to compromise with anything less than the best in appointments, and that you will not dilute your potential impact by scattering in too many fields, or by duplicating programs already sufficiently recognized. I hope this is not a presumptuous remark, but it is not addressed to your intentions, but to the pressure you may be under to hasten the organization of your staff. In view of the splendid endorsement that you and Dr. Waring have given my proposals, I hardly need be concerned.

With best wishes,

Joshua Lederberg